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ABSTRACT

This book describes the experiences of 26 retired rural school teachers from western Wisconsin. The book was inspired by the community solidarity of the Cloverdale Community Club (Wisconsin) in maintaining the old Cloverdale School building. Cloverdale School was a typical one-room rural school, built in 1857 and closed by the consolidation process in 1962. The former rural school teachers reminisce about their teaching experiences in Cloverdale school; their education and preparation for teaching; their motivation for entering the teaching profession; their relationships with parents, students, school board members, and supervisors; the hardships and joys of being a rural school teacher; extracurricular activities that were expected of the rural school teacher; the challenges of covering a wide range of subjects and meeting the needs of students; discipline problems; their opinions about prayer in school; and finally, their opinions on consolidation, which virtually abolished one-room schools. When they began teaching, most rural school teachers were barely 2 years older than some of their students. Most teachers had received a year's training to prepare for instructing students in grades 1-8 in reading, arithmetic, history, geography, grammar, physiology, penmanship, spelling, art, music, and physical education. The schoolhouse did not have electricity and to heat the near-freezing room, a fire had to be built before the students arrived. In addition, water was carried daily from a nearby well. On average, teachers were paid $75 a month of which they gave $18 a month for room and board with a local family. Despite the hardships of teaching in a one-room rural school, teachers focused on the joys of teaching and their own love of learning that influenced their extensive teaching careers. Includes many photographs. (LP)

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